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STATE FOR SCA/FO DAS GASTRIGHT, SCA/A, S/CRS, SA/PB, S/CT,
EUR/RPM
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN
OSD FOR KIMMITT
CENTCOM FOR CFC-A, CG CJTF-76, POLAD, JICCENT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/17/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [MARR](#) [AF](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: SENATOR MCCAIN AND KARZAI DIFFER OVER PAKISTAN

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald Neumann for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Over a December 15 dinner, Senator McCain and President Karzai disagreed over the extent to which the Government of Pakistan was supporting the Taliban and terrorism in Afghanistan. Karzai's theme throughout the evening was that Afghans see Pakistan as entirely intertwined with Taliban efforts to destabilize Afghanistan and that Afghans overwhelmingly believe the problem of the Taliban is fundamentally a Pakistani problem. Karzai deflected suggestions that he tone down his rhetoric attacking Pakistan and argued that the people's attention had to be pointed to the cause of their suffering, "otherwise the people will get confused".

¶2. (C) Pakistan did not know what was in its own interests, Karzai contended. If Pakistan was still dreaming of creating an "Islamic Empire", then it would have to deal with Islamic extremism, but it would only get "burned". Karzai repeated a regular but deeply believed litany, saying he received regular messages from Afghans living in Pakistan describing how the Taliban were protected and even moved around by the Pakistan military. Defense Minister Wardak, who worked with ISI for 15 years against the Soviets, debunked any notions of rogue elements in the ISI. He claimed no one in the ISI could make a move without the military chief knowing it and that the ISI supported the Taliban financially.

¶3. (C) Senator McCain respectfully, firmly and repeatedly disagreed with Karzai over Pakistani intentions, as it made no sense for President Musharraf to create an unstable neighbor. The Senator characterized Musharraf as an honorable military man but questioned why he did not do more. Senator McCain viewed the North Waziristan Agreement as a Faustian bargain, but did not see Musharraf's motives as evil. A destabilized region was not in Pakistan's interest. The Senator suggested some thought be given to conditioning U.S. aid to Pakistan, as it was not a tolerable situation if U.S. soldiers were dying due to Pakistani inaction. The Senator said he had to part ways with Karzai as he did not accept the premise that Pakistan was destabilizing Afghanistan intentionally.

¶4. (C) Karzai pursued his criticism of Pakistan throughout the dinner, at one point arguing that Pakistan wanted to frustrate the U.S. in Afghanistan and dreamt of controlling Afghanistan again. One result is that the Taliban and Al Qaeda are now one, he claimed, which was not the case 10 years ago. Karzai gave no indication he would tone down his rhetoric. Ambassador Neumann argued that the language made our controlling Pakistani behavior harder and passed on the request from Secretary Rice to stop the public condemnation. Karzai justified his attacks on Pakistan as part of a bigger cause. He firmly believed his role was to inform the Afghan people about who he sees as responsible for Afghanistan's problems and feels that if the government does not tell them, they will lose the whole purpose of the war on terror. Karzai said NATO must choose whether it will confront Pakistan or just ignore the loss of its soldiers.

¶5. (U) This message was not cleared by Senator McCain.
NEUMANN